DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 528 EC 182 048

AUTHOR Cooper, Carolyn S.; And Others
TITLE Interagency Collaboration and Parent Empowerment. Revised.
PUB DATE 8 Oct 85
NOTE 12p.; Paper originally presented at the Council for Exceptional Children/Division for Early Childhood, National Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs (Denver, CO, October 6-8, 1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation; *Cooperative Programs; Coordination; *Disabilities; Infants; *Parent Education; Parent Participation; Preschool Education

ABSTRACT

The paper describes a collaborative effort between Head Start and the Family, Infant and Preschool Program at Western Carolina Center (Morganton, North Carolina). The collaborative effort was designed to accomplish the goals of improving (1) services to handicapped children and their families, (2) the quality of parent involvement, and (3) mainstreaming opportunities for handicapped children. The primary way in which the two agencies worked together was through Project PAVE (Parents Are Volunteers Who Excel), which provided training for parent volunteers to work in Head Start classrooms. As a result of the parent training program 36 parents and professionals were trained. Six workshops were conducted on topics such as behavior management, school readiness, motor development, play, and community resources. (Author/CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED267528

Interagency Collaboration and Parent Empowerment

Carolyn S. Cooper

Greta E. Helms

Janet C. Weeldreyer

Carl J. Dunst

Family, Infant and Preschool Program
Western Carolina Center
300 Enola Road
Morganton, North Carolina 28655
(704) 433-2661

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Carolyn S. Cooper
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

This is a revised edition of a paper presented on October 8, 1985 at the Division for Early Childhood Conference held in Denver, Colorado. The purpose of this paper is to describe a collaborative effort between Head Start and the Family, Infant and Preschool Program at Western Carolina Center (Morganton, NC) designed to train parent volunteers to work in Head Start Classrooms.

Running Head: Interagency Collaboration and Parent Empowerment

EC 182048

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Interagency Collaboration and Parent Empowerment

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe a collaborative effort between Head Start and the Family, Infant and Preschool Program at Western Carolina Center (Morganton, North Carolina). The collaborative effort was designed to accomplish the goals of improving (1) services to handicapped children and their families, (2) the quality of parent involvement, and (3) mainstreaming opportunities for handicapped children. The primary way in which the two agencies worked together was through Project PAVE (Family, Infant and Preschool Program) training parent volunteeers to work in Head Start classrooms. As a result of the parent training program, 36 parents and professionals were trained.

The Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP) is a regional early intervention program located at Western Carolina Center in Morganton, North Carolina. In addition to home-based early intervention services, FIPP operates a number of Special Projects, one of which is Project PAVE (Parents Are Volunteers who Excel). The major goal of Project PAVE is to train parents to serve as support staff in preschool classrooms and other child care settings. Once parent volunteers are trained, they teach child care skills to other volunteers. Project PAVE staff were responsible for the training conducted with the Head Start program described in this paper.

The Head Start program involved in this collaboration is sponsored by Blue Ridge Community Action. This agency was started in 1965 as a merger between Community Action Agencies in Burke and Caldwell counties, which are located in North Carolina. The Blue Ridge Community Action Head Start provides child development services to disadvantaged and handicapped children in Burke and Caldwell counties.

The Collaborative Effort

Planning

Prior to initiating the collaborative program between Project PAVE and Head Start, the director of the Head Start program and the Coordinator of Community Resources at FIPP met to explore ways in which the two agencies could work together. They identified both the strengths and needs of each agency as

as shown in Table 1.

After identifying mutual strengths and needs, the representatives from the two programs agreed to initiate a collaborative effort to accomplish the following goals for their respective preschool programs:

1. Improve services to handicapped children and their families
2. Improve the quality of parent involvement
3. Improve mainstreaming opportunities for handicapped children

---

INSERT TABLE I HERE

In order to meet these goals, each of the two agencies agreed to provide certain services. Head Start agreed to accept moderately to severely handicapped children into their program. They also expressed a willingness to provide additional mainstreaming experiences for the handicapped children enrolled in the Head Start programs. Project PAVE agreed to train parent volunteers to work in Head Start classrooms, and offered to assist the Head Start staff with programming for the moderately to severely handicapped youngsters.

Steps in Carrying out Parent Training

The first step in training parent volunteers to work in the Head Start classrooms was for Project PAVE staff to conduct six "Parent Power" Workshops, each of which lasted about six hours.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The workshop topics, chosen by Head Start, included: (a) behavior management, (b) school readiness, (c) issues involving mainstreaming, (d) the use of performance checklists for training staff, (checklist training), (e) motor development, (f) money management, (g) physical development, (h) child's play, and (i) using community resources to meet child and family needs.

Project PAVE staff stressed the importance of communication as the key to building parent/professional partnerships. This theme was a fundamental part of conducting the workshops. Fun, non-threatening, icebreaker activities were incorporated into each day's schedule. These activities encouraged the formation of positive relationships between parents and staff. The format of the workshops was informal. Training was carried out in both large and small groups.

After completing workshop training, both agencies focused their efforts on the Head Start classrooms. Prior to PAVE staff actually working with the Head Start parents, observations of the classrooms were done using the Preschool Assessment of Classroom Environment Scale (PACE) (McWilliam & Dunst, 1985). This scale evaluates the preschool classroom in terms of environmental organization, staff utilization, instructional methods and curriculum, program evaluation, and program organization. This scale provided Project PAVE staff with incoming baseline information for planning parent volunteer training activities in the Head Start classrooms.

The next step was for Head Start staff and PAVE staff to work out the specifics of how, when, and where the volunteer training of parents would be conducted. Those in charge agreed to carry out training activities at two Head Start sites. Parents in the two designated sites attended informational meetings to learn the specifics about being a volunteer in the classroom. At this time the parents registered to receive continuing education units from a local community college for their classroom training.

Parents participated in on-the-job classroom training where performance checklists were used by PAVE volunteer trainers as the primary teaching technique. Performance checklists delineate the specific behaviors which constitute the elements of quality intervention. The checklists are task analyses of the activity to be performed. Training was carried out by showing the volunteer how to follow the instructional sequence of tasks listed on the checklists. Parents were trained to implement basic child care routines using checklists developed for (1) snack time (2) transitions, (3) group time, and (4) incidental teaching. Figure I includes an example of a performance checklist. By using performance checklists, trainers were able to (1) define for the parents what constitutes quality care, (2) provide immediate feedback as to how well the parents were implementing the routines, and (3) measure how well activities were being carried out.

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

More specifically, nine steps were followed to train parent volunteeers to use the checklists. First, the PAVE volunteer trainer reviewed the items on the performance checklist with the parent volunteer. Second, the parent observed the trainer using a checklist for monitoring performance. Third, the parent discussed his/her observations with the trainer. This step was critical to the parent volunteer's understanding of both how to correctly use the performance checklist as a training tool and the quality of performance desired during implementation of the activity. Fourth, the PAVE volunteer trainer observed the Head Start parent completing the same activity he/she had observed. Fifth, the PAVE volunteer trainer reviewed the steps of the teaching routine with the parent volunteer indicating that each individual step had either been completed well or needed improvement. Sixth, strategies for improvement of individual steps of the checklist were discussed with the parent volunteer. Seventh, the teaching routine was used as a training tool until the parent volunteer was able to complete all of the steps successfully. Eighth, the PAVE volunteer trainer provided positive feedback as often as possible to maintain the skill of the parent trainer. The final step was to periodically use the teaching routine in order to determine the need to reimplement training.

Thirty-six parents and professionals were trained as part of the parent training program. A number of parents who had

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

participated in the initial Parent Power Workshops had children who graduated from Head Start and entered public school in the fall. This left a shortage of trained parents. To address this need, additional workshops were held to train both parents and staff. Data is presently being collected to measure the professionals' perception of the competencies a volunteer possesses.

In summary, a collaborative effort was carried out between Blue Ridge Community Action Head Start and the Family, Infant and Preschool Program to accomplish the goals of improving (1) services to handicapped children and their families, (2) the quality of parent involvement, and (3) mainstreaming opportunities for handicapped children. The primary way in which the two agencies worked together was through Project PAVE (Family, Infant and Preschool Program) training parent volunteers to work in Head Start classrooms. As a result of the parent training program, 36 parents and professionals were trained.

FIPP and Head Start are continuing to benefit from working collaboratively. Future efforts will be directed toward developing strategies to ease transitions for Head Start and FIPP children who are leaving preschool programs and entering public school.

Reference

McWilliam, R., & Dunst, C. (1985). Preschool Assessment of Classroom Environment Scale. Unpublished rating scale, Family, Infant and Preschool Program, Western Carolina Center.

TABLE 1

Strengths and Needs of FIPP and Head Start

Agency	Strengths	Needs
Head Start	1. Parent involvement in classroom 2. Classroom program of integrated services 3. Nutritional program 4. Transportation program 5. Medical/dental services 6. Community/interagency relationships	1. Staff training 2. Parent training 3. Strategies for home-school linkage 4. Specialized intervention services 5. Procedures for effective use of volunteers in Head Start classrooms 6. Information on: *Classroom organization *Curriculum *Specialized equipment for handicapped children
FIPP	1. Family focused program 2. Home-based intervention services 3. Parent volunteer training 4. Staff training 5. Parent operated preschools 6. Staff expertise for intervention techniques for severely handicapped children	1. Transportation for families/children 2. Health related programs 3. Integrated classroom experiences for handicapped preschoolers 4. Coordinated transitional services for children entering public schools 5. Strengthened community relationships and interagency involvement 6. Knowledge of community concerns

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Figure 1

TEACHING ROUTINE: INCIDENTAL TEACHING

Volunteer:
Observer:
Date
Activity

DID THE VOLUNTEER:

1. Select a variety of toys and activities that are appropriate for the children and that the children enjoy?
2. Allow each child to choose the toy he/she wants to play with?
3. Pay attention to what the child is doing? (e.g., smile, comment, join the activity).
4. Encourage the child to practice/continue his play activity?
5. Get the child to elaborate on what he/she is doing? (e.g., do something different with same materials, use words in combination, describe what doing in more detail).
6. Encourage the child to practice/continue the new skill?
7. Smile or praise the child for his attempts or mastery of a new skill? Ensure that the activity is reinforcing and fun to the child?

Did you complete each of the following steps in training the volunteer using this teaching routine for incidental teaching?

_____ 1. Review the steps in the teaching routine with the volunteer.
_____ 2. Have the volunteer use the teaching routine to observe the volunteer trainer in the classroom.
_____ 3. Discuss the implementation of the routine with the volunteer.
_____ 4. Use the teaching routine to observe the volunteer implementing the routine.
_____ 5. Review the steps of the teaching routine with the volunteer Indicate in the blocks beside each step:
*** (Completed Well) NI (Needs Improvement) NA (Not Applicable)**
_____ 6. Discuss strategies for improving necessary steps with the volunteer.
_____ 7. Continue to use this teaching routine as a training tool until the volunteer has completed all steps well.
_____ 8. Maintain the volunteer's skill level by providing positive feedback as often as possible.
_____ 9. Periodically use the teaching routine for determining the need to reimplement training.